

REMARKS

With the present amendment, claims 14 and 29 have been canceled.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections of the pending claims. It is submitted that MACNAUGHTON et al. do not provide the ability to search user entered membership information. That is, the claimed comparing a retrieval condition with the user entered membership information does not appear to be disclosed by the reference.

MACNAUGHTON et al. permit members to obtain a list of other members currently participating in a community. This search capability is discussed at col. 9, lines 17 - 41; col. 14, lines 45 - 48; and col. 15, lines 46 - 48. The search capability is specifically described as requesting a list of all users currently logged into the community. Col. 14, lines 45 - 48. The search capability is also referred to as the Who's Online service. Although MACNAUGHTON et al. disclose membership profile information, there is no discussion of searching the profile data. It is believed that col. 9, lines 17 - 41 detail an exhaustive list of MACNAUGHTON et al.'s capabilities. That portion (and the rest of the disclosure) do not describe or suggest search of membership information that is user entered. Searching the user entered data provides a user with the ability to locate users satisfying specific conditions and not just users who are online.

The tracking server that the Examiner relies upon does not pertain to searching user entered membership information. Col. 8, lines 43 - 65; and col. 16, line 15 - col 18, line 22 describe the tracking server and its capabilities. The tracking server keeps track of user actions, e.g., web pages accessed, and notifies new users of the tracked information when the new users have just entered the community. Col. 9, lines 43 - 52. The "Who is here" request (noted by the Examiner) returns to the user a list of logged in members. Contrary to the Examiner's assertions, no disclosure of searching user entered membership information is provided. Further, the Examiner correctly notes that MACNAUGHTON et al. provide the function of searching and listing members currently in the community, and the list contains membership information. However, MACNAUGHTON et al. do not provide the ability to search the user entered membership information itself.

Column 21, lines 38 - 45 describe an example illustrating MACNAUGHTON et al.'s shortcomings. The passage states that a user attempts to find someone to play a game with. In order to do so, the user determines who is online and then launches a game once another member accepts the invitation. The present invention would more efficiently accomplish the same. According to the present invention, the user could search the user entered membership information to determine who is interested in playing a game (rather than generally inquiring who is online). Then, the user could converse

with the matching members before inviting them to play a game. Thus, the present invention refines the crude approach of MACNAUGHTON et al.

Claims 15 and 30 recite not only finding users that satisfy a predetermined criteria, but also selecting at least one of those users and sending a message to the selected user(s). MACNAUGHTON et al. do not enable generation of the refined list and also do not enable selecting some of the users that satisfy the criteria for message sending. MACNAUGHTON et al. appear to only permit sending of a message to a single user.

Dependent claims 2 - 13 and 17 - 28 are also believed to recite further patentable subject matter of the invention and therefore are also believed allowable over the prior art. As such, allowance of the dependent claims is deemed proper for at least the same reasons noted for the independent claims, in addition to reasons related to their own recitations. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and an indication of the allowability of all of the claims in the present application.

Thus, for at least these reasons it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw all of the outstanding rejections and provide an indication of the allowability of all of the pending claims.

Any amendments to the claims in this amendment that have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art should be considered to have been

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made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Kazutoyo MAEHIRO

Will. E. Lyall Reg. No.
Bruce H. Bernstein 41,568
Reg. No. 29,027

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GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191